



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 December 2024

by A Caines BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 05 December 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/P2935/D/24/3348104

The Coach House, C345 Furze Hill To Wood Hill, Ponteland NE20 0JA

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Scott Eland against the decision of Northumberland County Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/04338/FUL.
 - The development proposed is an entrance porch.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Council made its decision on the basis of amended plans. I have considered the appeal on the same basis.
3. The appeal site is identified as being within the Green Belt (GB). However, the effect on the GB was not cited in the Council's refusal reasons and it is common ground between the main parties that the proposal is not inappropriate development in the GB. I see no reason to disagree. As a result, I shall not consider this matter any further in my Decision.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the host building and surrounding area.

Reasons

5. The appeal property is one of a number of dwellings formed through conversion of a range of stone and slate former agricultural buildings. The surrounding area exhibits an overriding rural character with the range of buildings and adjoining land set within an agricultural and rural landscape characterised by fields and punctuated by agricultural and other traditional architecture.
6. I saw that the residential conversion scheme has been designed and carried out to be sensitive to the traditional form and character of the original buildings. The simple, unadorned form of the original building elevations has been largely retained through minimal alterations and the original openings have been reused for windows and doors, including a number of highly distinctive arched openings. As a result, the buildings have retained a strong group identity and, although now obviously in residential use, are readily identifiable as former agricultural buildings with a traditional rural character, such that they contribute positively and distinctively to the character and appearance of the area.

7. The proposed porch would be of limited depth and its oak frame and slate roof materials would be suitably in keeping. It would, however, extend across the width of both arched openings on the west elevation. Even if the arched openings were to remain physically intact, they would become enclosed and largely obscured. As these existing features make an important contribution to the traditional character of the building, their loss in terms of external appearance would significantly harm the appearance and traditional character, both of the appeal property and the range as a whole. Moreover, its width and design, particularly the pronounced central gable feature, would detract from the simple traditional character and composition of the west elevation. It would not, as the appellant contends, bring consistency or a beneficial reduction in the amount of glazing on this elevation. Thus, despite representing a modest increase in overall floorspace terms, the porch would be a jarring and entirely unsatisfactory addition to the building.
8. Although the porch would unlikely be overly perceptible from the road and a nearby public footpath due to the partial screening from the boundary wall and surrounding buildings, it would nonetheless be visible to the occupiers of the adjoining properties.
9. Consequently, the development would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the host building and its immediate surroundings. This is contrary to Policies QOP1, QOP2, and HOU9 of the Northumberland Local Plan (2022), as well as Policy PNP2 of the Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan (2017). These policies seek to ensure, amongst other things, that new development achieves high quality design, respects the style and character of the existing dwelling, and contributes positively to local character and distinctiveness. It is also contrary to section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework in respect of achieving well designed and beautiful places. I find that there are no material considerations that outweigh the harm I have identified and the conflict with the development plan.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

A Caines

INSPECTOR